

PRESS RELEASE



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF IMPERIAL

El Centro, California – The Imperial County Superior Court developed a six phase plan to restore full services to the residents of Imperial County. On March 15, 2021, the Court implemented Phase 1 of the plan. Phase 1 opened the Civil, Probate, and long cause Family Law calendars to counsel, litigants, and witnesses. On March 29, 2021, the Court will implement Phase 2 and Phase 3 which will open the following calendars and departments to counsel, litigants, and witnesses: all remaining Family Law calendars; Restraining Order hearings; El Centro Traffic and Small Claims; Juvenile and Mental Health calendars; El Centro Traffic Clerk's Office fully opened without restriction. The Court will also open for the Criminal Readiness Calendar on March 29th. All counsel, witnesses, and out-of-custody defendants will be required to appear in the courtroom. Only in-custody defendants will continue to appear remotely until Phase 4 is fully implemented.

The Court anticipates implementation of Phase 4 sometime in April and will provide a press release in advance. Remote appearances in departments and calendars affected by implementation of each phase will return to those authorized by the regular Rules of Court and regular local rules that were in place before the reduction of services that was caused by the COVID pandemic, unless specifically authorized otherwise. The only persons allowed into courtrooms during Phases 1 through 4 are counsel, litigants, witnesses, and members of the press.

The Court has been conducting criminal jury trials throughout the pandemic and the number of trials will increase in the weeks and months to come.

All non-confidential criminal matters are currently available to the public to listen to at <https://imperial.courts.ca.gov/CourtCalendars>. The Court anticipates making all other non-confidential matters available as well in the next few weeks at the same Court website link.

Finally, the Court will continue with its safety protocols to ensure that those who work and enter the courthouse are as safe as they can be under the circumstances while ensuring every litigant access to justice. The safety protocols and the revised Master Plan for the Restoration of Services can be found on the Court's web site at <https://imperial.courts.ca.gov>.